



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

December 1, 2005

To: OPI MASS Representatives

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Summary of OPI Activities for December 2005

Here is a summary of the current activities at the Office of Public Instruction for December 2005. This summary can also be found at www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/. If you would like to be added to a Listserv to receive the Summary of OPI Activities each month, please register at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/regforms/OPIActivities/>.

Office of the State Superintendent

Highlights of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's Activities for November 2005:

- ❖ Attended Quality Schools Interim Legislative Committee meetings on school funding issues
- ❖ Participated in numerous television, radio and newspaper interviews
- ❖ Presented Bell Award for Montana history with Norma Ashby to Great Falls teacher Linda Ferguson
- ❖ Reported that the successful state-wide campaign called "Montana Kids Care" channeled more than \$112,000 from Montana school children to aid the victims of Hurricane Katrina
- ❖ Visited with second and fifth graders from Jefferson School and thanked them for making fall decorations for the OPI office
- ❖ Visited with staff from the Division of Educational Research and Service at the University of Montana regarding school crisis response program
- ❖ Attended the Board of Public Education meeting in Helena
- ❖ Spoke to parents and teachers in White Sulphur Springs about NCLB and school funding issues.
- ❖ Participated in the Leadership Helena panel discussion on education with local school administrators
- ❖ Spoke at the Veterans Day Assembly at Columbia Falls HS honoring local veterans
- ❖ Greeted students at C.R.Anderson Middle School and visited a sixth grade social studies class
- ❖ Read to second grade students at Four Georgians Elementary School in Helena
- ❖ Welcomed Kyrgyzstan Minister of Education Nur uulu Dosbol and former Minister of Education Camilla Sharshkeeva to Montana and hosted two days of meetings during which the state superintendent and OPI staff explained Montana's education system to the visitors
- ❖ Appeared on local television with the former and current Kyrgyzstani ministers of education
- ❖ Participated in Bryant School NCLB Blue Ribbon celebration
- ❖ Participated in the monthly OPI Cabinet meeting and monthly Land Board meeting
- ❖ Attended Leadership Meeting of K-12 and higher education state agencies
- ❖ Received an excellent fiscal audit from the Legislative Auditor for managing the largest general fund budget of any state agency
- ❖ Released Montana Kids First Act for funding schools for the 2006-07 school year

"It is our mission to advocate, communicate, educate and be accountable to those we serve."

State Superintendent Proposes School Funding Plan

On November 29, Superintendent Linda McCulloch presented her proposal, *Montana Kids First Act*, for consideration by the special legislative session to deal with school funding. For the 2006-2007 school year, McCulloch proposes \$61.8 million in new on-going funding for schools and \$9.1 million in new "one time only" funding for a total of \$70.9 million. An Excel spreadsheet summarizing the proposal is available at <http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/superintendent/MTKidsFirst.xls>

The plan includes:

\$11.4 Million for Full Day Kindergarten

\$38.9 Million for \$3000 per educator entitlement

\$15.0 Million for Indian Education for All

\$ 3.5 Million for Retirement Funding for Federally-salaried Employees

\$ 2.0 Million School Facilities Condition Inventory

All the proposed programs relate to the Legislature's definition for a system of quality education as defined in Senate Bill 152. The Montana Supreme Court directed the Legislature to relate all school funding to educationally relevant factors from a definition for quality education.

OPI Contact: Joe Lamson, Communications Director, jlamson@mt.gov or 406-444-3160.

Montana Students Contribute More than \$112,000 to the "Montana Kids Care" Campaign

In September, State Superintendent Linda McCulloch launched the "Montana Kids Care Campaign" to encourage students and educators to continue the collection of donations for victims of Hurricane Katrina. The Office of Public Instruction established a special website at www.opi.mt.gov/katrina/ to provide information on how to join the *Montana Kids Care* campaign and related Hurricane Katrina information. Since September, the Office of Public Instruction has heard from 98 schools and student organizations from across Montana and has recorded contributions that total \$112,441. Schools donated their contributions directly to a wide variety of different relief organizations. More than half the funds went to the American Red Cross and Salvation Army. Other efforts sent relief to "adopted" individual schools in Louisiana and Mississippi. Montana kids deserve a great big thank you for all their hard work.

OPI Contact: Joe Lamson, Communications Director, 444-3160 or jlamson@mt.gov.

15 Montana Educators Attain National Board Certification in 2005

Congratulations to the following Montana educators for achieving certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards:

- ❖ Angela Mclean, Anaconda
- ❖ Jeffrey Meide, Billings
- ❖ Kim Busch, Billings
- ❖ Mari Orner, Billings
- ❖ Andree Anderberg, Helena
- ❖ Linda Jones, Billings
- ❖ Diana Mysse, Billings
- ❖ Kathryn Pfaffinger, Billings
- ❖ Judith Rigler, Billings
- ❖ Carl Straub, Helena
- ❖ Shelley Pelc, Helena
- ❖ Susan Daly, Billings
- ❖ Jacqueline McDonald, Billings
- ❖ Karen Rice, Billings
- ❖ Linda Boyer, Billings

These teachers are each eligible to receive a \$3,000 stipend in 2006 provided they remain employed as full-time teachers in Montana's public schools.

Contact: Erik Burke, MEA-MFT, eburke@mea-mft.org or 447-1462

Nominate Superintendent's, Principal's and Outstanding Educators

Do you know an educator that demonstrates exceptional instructional ability, is inspiring and exhibits professional leadership? The Office of Public Instruction is seeking recommendations of outstanding educators for the OPI Talent Pool. The OPI Talent Pool consists of K-12 Montana educators who were recommended to the Office of Public Instruction as outstanding teachers. The educators in the OPI Talent Pool may be considered for membership by OPI on advisory boards and task forces, as well as candidates for special recognition programs. Nominations must be confidential and the person being nominated must not know they are being considered.

Recommendations should be made using the 2005 Talent Pool form at

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/superintendent/talentpool.html>. Please take a moment to consider recommending one or more of Montana's great educators to the Talent Pool.

Board of Public Education Meeting

The Board of Public Education will hold its next regular meeting January 12-13, 2006, at the Great Northern Hotel in Helena, Montana. Tentative agenda information items from the Office of Public Instruction include: the Superintendent's Report, an Assessment Update and, NCLB, MACIE, Accreditation and Special Education reports. Agenda action items include Accreditation issues. Contacts are Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-0300 or Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams (406) 444-7325.

Annual Data Collection

Thank you to all school districts for submitting education data to OPI through the Annual Data collection. As of November 30, 2005 all but two public school districts had submitted their data. This data will allow OPI to proceed to the Board of Public Education with accreditation recommendations after the first of the year. The data will also be used during the anticipated special session of the legislature.

OPI Issues RFP for Data Warehouse and Student Information System

On November 16, the Montana Department of Administration released OPI's Request for Proposals (RFP) for a student information system, special education information system, and education data warehouse. The 2005 Montana legislature appropriated \$2.8 million for OPI to develop and implement an education data warehouse and student information system. The funding will support OPI's efforts to design the warehouse and information system, assign a unique student identifier for each public school student, and begin collecting student demographic data in the fall of 2006. Included in the Student Information System is a system for managing individualized education programs (IEPs) online for students with disabilities. The RFP is posted online at <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/doa/gsd/business/pdfdownloads/RFP06-1203O.DOC>.

The due date for vendor responses is January 10, 2006.

OPI Contact: Dave Nagel, Project Manager, 406-444-1641 or dnagel@mt.gov.

Proposed Administrative Rules on School Controversy

The State Superintendent has proposed amendments to school controversy rules contained in Administrative Rules of Montana, Title 10, Chapter 6. The hearing on these amendments is scheduled for December 7, 2005, 9:00 a.m. in the Superintendent's Conference room, 1227 11th Avenue, Helena Montana. The notice of proposed amendments may be accessed at <http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/legaldivision/10-6-114propdf.pdf>. OPI Contact: Beverly Marlow, Legal Division, bemarlow@mt.gov or 406-444-3172.

Missing Children Information

State Statute (44-2-506 MCA) requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to assist the Missing Children Information program by distributing the list of missing school children on a monthly basis. The missing children report is available on the web at <http://www.doi.state.mt.us/enforcement/missingchildren/missingchildrenschoolage.pdf>. If you have questions about the contents of the report, please contact the Montana Missing Person Clearinghouse at 406-444-1526.

Assessment

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/index.html>

The November issue of ***JUMP Join Us in Measuring Progress***, the OPI electronic assessment newsletter is online at <http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/JUMP.html>.

The November issue contains information about the Spring 2006 testing windows, tips on how to use the query and reporting tools on OPI's website for NRT and CRT results, training for the spring 2006 MontCAS test administration, opportunities for private school students to participate in the statewide assessments, registering for bar code labels for test answer documents, schedules of important dates for the NRT and CRT, links to technical manuals, training on the use of released items, math vocabulary lists, responsibilities of test coordinators, and special information about the CRT-Alternate.

OPI Contact: Judy Snow, Assessment Director, 444-3656 or jsnow@mt.gov.

Assessment Conference scheduled for May 2006

The Office of Public Instruction will be hosting an assessment conference on May 1-2, 2006 at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel in Helena, Montana. The theme of the conference is "There's More to Assessment than Testing." This conference will include high quality breakout sessions, lively general sessions, and dynamic keynote speakers. The registration fee for the conference will be \$60 which includes a buffet breakfast and lunch both days. Registration will be limited to 400 and will begin in February 2006. More details about the conference will be available soon on our website at www.opi.mt.gov. If you have questions concerning the conference, please contact Sue Tinsley at 406-444-5643 or stinsley@mt.gov.

Information Technology

Please note that the e-mail extension for all OPI employees is now **@mt.gov** instead of @state.mt.us. For the remainder of 2005, both extensions are active, but after December 31, 2005, only the mt.gov extension will be operational. Also note that the OPI webpage address is now www.opi.mt.gov.

The **2005 Montana Government Information Technology Conference** is scheduled for December 7-9 at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel in Helena. The conference is geared for government information technology professionals. The 2005 Keynote and theme is "Business Process Management." For more information, click on www.itconference.mt.gov

Montana Schools can now order Citrix software at a minimum 40% discount utilizing the State of Montana Citrix Agreement. Schools can order Citrix through their Citrix Channel Partner and reference the State of Montana Citrix Agreement number: SOM140905

Product list Includes:

- Presentation Server
- Access Suite
- Password Manager
- Product Step-up or Migrations
- Citrix Access Gateway Appliance
- Citrix NetScaler Application Load Balancer

Minimum 5% discount for Citrix Support Agreements

Minimum 5% discount for Citrix Consulting Services

Minimum 5% discount for Citrix Subscription Advantage Renewal.

For more information, contact: Terry Romero, Enterprise Relationship Manager, Citrix Systems Inc., 303-881-3136, Theresa.Romero@citrix.com

School Budgeting and Accounting

Preliminary Maintenance of Effort and Special Education Reversion Reports Posted

In late November, OPI e-mailed a notice to all districts and special education cooperatives regarding maintenance of effort (MOE) for ESEA Title programs, IDEA Part B and Preschool special education grants, state special education allowable cost funding reversion and career and technical education (CTE) expenditures. All district and special education cooperative clerks, district superintendents, special education directors, and county superintendents should review the information carefully. This process requires your immediate attention to correct any reporting errors on the FY2004-05 Trustees' Financial Summary that might have caused MOE or reversion problems. The deadline for corrections is December 20, so prompt action is critical. OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt, (406) 444-1257 or joberembt@mt.gov.

Tax-Free Vehicle Fuel (Gas and Diesel) Discounts Available through State

School districts are eligible to participate in the state vehicle fueling network, which automatically calculates state-negotiated discounts and removes federal excise taxes at the pump through Wright Express. Wright Express fuel cards are accepted at 95% of the gas stations around Montana. Over 50% of schools are already participating in the Vehicle Fueling Program. School districts with contracted transportation services can purchase fuel for the contractors through this program. Contact Devin Garrity at (406) 444-3366 or e-mail dgarrity@mt.gov to request an information packet on the Vehicle Fueling Program. The packet will include important information about state and federal special fuel tax exemptions.

2nd Semester Bus Inspections

The FY06 2nd Semester Pre-Printed Bus Inspection forms are posted on the OPI website at the following link: <http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/0000D9D9-80000007/0001BC9C-80000007/>. Buses must pass inspection for 2nd semester by January 31, 2006, in order to be eligible for full funding for the second semester. Please schedule inspections early to allow time for re-inspection by January 31, if necessary. OPI Contact: Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@mt.gov.

Out-of-District Attendance Agreements

Tuition for students placed in a district outside the student's district of residence by a state agency or court, including tribal court, will be paid by OPI beginning with attendance during school year 2005-06. Districts should send a copy of approved attendance agreements, FP-14 and FP-14A (if

add-on charges will be claimed) to OPI. Forms must be received by OPI no later than June 30, 2006. OPI Contact: Mike Waterman, (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@mt.gov.

Central Grant Files Required

OPI policy requires that each district must maintain a central grant file in the business office for audit purposes. For each grant project, the file must contain the grant application; grant award document; approved grant budget; cash request form(s); record of cash receipts; record of matching expenditures, if required; budget modification forms, if any are filed; any significant correspondence; final reporting and closeout documents. The grant's authorized representative, who is normally the district superintendent, should file copies of all grant documents with the clerk of the district to ensure compliance.

OPI has a standard form called the "Federal/State Grant Control Record" that can be used as a cover page for each grant file. For a copy, see the OPI State and Federal Grants Handbook, Appendix B-1, number 5. The page is available under "Grant Control Record" on the School Finance Webpage: http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/schoolfinance/forms/gcrecord6_02.pdf. OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt, (406) 444-1257 or joberembt@mt.gov.

Save Money, Save Time - - State Term Contracts Available

School districts can use the state's term contracts to purchase a variety of goods and services at reduced prices. The State Purchasing Division has negotiated numerous term contracts with all types of vendors, including phone service and internet providers, computer equipment and software vendors, and office suppliers. Montana public school districts can use the term contracts just like any state agency can. Since the contracts were already negotiated on behalf of all state governmental entities, schools don't have to go through the bid process and can save time and money. Numerous items are also available from the State's Central Stores and Cooperative Purchasing Program. For more information, go to: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/discounts/Index.html>. OPI Contact: Sioux Roth (406) 444-4404 or sroth@mt.gov.

Department of Education Services

2006 U.S. Senate Youth Scholarship Program Delegates

The Office of Public Instruction is proud to announce that Max Counter of Butte High School and Jennifer Tiskus of Polson High School will represent Montana as delegates for the 2006 U.S. Senate Youth Scholarship Program. Noah W. Stout of Darby High School and John Eikens of Loyola-Sacred Heart High School were selected as alternates.

During the week of March 4-11, 2006, Max and Jennifer will be immersed in an intensive on-site study of federal government. Visits to the Senate, House of Representatives, Supreme Court and the Pentagon will be interspersed with hours at various Smithsonian museums. They will hear major policy addresses by senators, cabinet members, officials of the Departments of State and others.

Each year two outstanding high school juniors or seniors from each state are selected to receive an all-expense-paid week in Washington, D.C. and a \$5,000 college scholarship, funded by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation. This year 313 Montana high school students competed for the award.

We join their families, friends and teachers in congratulating all four of these outstanding high school students on this achievement! For more information contact Carol Gneckow, Office of Public

Instruction, (406) 444-2417 or e-mail, cgneckow@mt.gov or visit the Web page <http://www.opi.mt.gov/scholarships/index.html>.

The U.S. Department of Education has created a **26-page, user-friendly guide to the No Child Left Behind Act** for state education leaders. The guide explains the basic principles and components of the law, ranging from disaggregating data to assessment requirements to the goal of proficiency for all students by 2014. <http://www.ecs.org/00CN2786>

Career, Technical and Adult Education Division

The **Montana DECA Fall Conference** will be held December 11th and 12th in Whitefish. The focus of the workshops, speakers and special presentations is Hospitality and Tourism.

OPI Contact: Diana Fiedler, dfiedler@mt.gov or 406-444-7991.

The deadline for the **Carl Perkins fall data collection** is approaching. All data must be submitted by December 31, 2005 unless an extension has been negotiated. To enter your data, access the VoEd Accountability System via IRIS. A step-by-step instruction manual has been posted on the CTE web page www.opi.mt.gov/CTE/Index.html.

OPI Contact: Karla Beagles, kbeagles@mt.gov or 406-444-9019.

Educational Opportunity and Equity Division

Please mark your calendars for the **2006 High Priority School Institute and 2006 Title I Conference**. The High Priority School Institute will be held at the Holiday Inn Grand, Billings on February 14, followed by the Title I Conference on February 15-16. Proposals for presentations at the Title I Conference are invited. Proposal forms and additional information regarding the two meetings are available at the Title I webpage, www.opi.mt.gov/TitleI/index.html

Montana's Early Learning Guidelines

Montana's Early Learning Guidelines were published in 2004. The Guidelines are a product of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services/Early Childhood Services Bureau and the Montana Early Childhood Project. These standards represent a collaboration of the child care and education communities. Montana's Early Learning Guidelines can be seen as a first step towards the Montana Content Standards that guide our kindergarten programs.

Montana's Early Learning Guidelines reflect what children need to know, understand, and be able to do by the time they reach kindergarten. They are written to address what adults can observe in children ages 3-5, and the ways they can support a child's individual development. The Guidelines are not a diagnostic tool, an assessment tool, or a mandatory set of regulations.

Montana's Early Learning Guidelines are written with the concept of Developmentally Appropriate Practice as its base. Knowing that development occurs at a unique pace for each individual child, the examples given in the Guidelines serve to demonstrate what a child may know, understand, and be able to do and are not meant to be exclusive nor exhaustive. While an adult may or may not observe some of these examples in an individual child, this does not suggest that the child is either advanced or delayed in his/her development. The examples are meant to clarify in the adults' mind what type of observable behaviors children may exhibit before they reach kindergarten. The purpose is to help the adult concentrate on ways to support optimal learning in the child.

The Guidelines are meant to be inclusive of all children and all of the settings in which they spend time before elementary school, whether that is at home, in a child care facility, at a Head Start program, in a preschool, or in any other setting. Montana's Early Learning Guidelines are a voluntary set of what some may call "child outcomes." They are meant to be used as a tool for early care and education practitioners, parents, elementary school teachers, or anyone else living and working with young children to recognize and support all children at the development level they exhibit.

To obtain copies for your teachers (PK-3), please contact Lisa Murphy, e-mail limurphy@mt.gov or 444-1400. Lisa is also available to provide Professional Development regarding the Early Learning Guidelines.

Indian Education

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/IndianEd/Index.html>

Staffing Update

Denise Juneau (former Indian Education Specialist, 1998-2001) will be coming on board in January 2006 as the new Director of Indian Education for the Office of Public Instruction. Denise brings a wealth of experience and knowledge as she will be providing leadership for ongoing Indian Education efforts and initiatives.

Mandy Smoker Broaddus was recently hired as an American Indian Academic Achievement Specialist. Mandy will be focusing her work on providing support and guidance to schools regarding American Indian achievement issues.

Indian Education for All Grants Update

Dr. Martha Many Grey Horses, Indian Education Grants Manager, would like to announce the funding of 18 Ready-to-Go grants to assist OPI in the implementation of Indian Education for All Montana. Approximately \$400,000 will be awarded to schools as they continue high quality instructional programs for implementing Indian Education for All Montana. Some excellent resources for all Montana educators will be coming out of these grant awards.

A request for proposals for Indian education Implementation Assistance grants (\$75,000 total per year) will be announced early December. These grants will go to organizations other than school districts to assist OPI in the implementation of Indian Education for All Montana. It is expected that grant awards will range from \$5,000 - \$15,000.

Curriculum Development Update

A group of Montana science educators were brought together in November to discuss ideas and current resources for integrating Indian Education for All Montana in relevant science content areas. Model lesson plans and professional development opportunities for science educators will be forthcoming.

Contracts with various individuals and organizations are underway to help develop and refine American Indian curriculum resources. Sample lessons and background information will be posted to the OPI Indian Education website.

Contact Mike Jetty, Indian Education Specialist at mjetty@mt.gov, if you would like to share exemplary curriculum resources currently in use.

The Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE) held its quarterly meeting on November 3, 2005, in Great Falls. Information was presented to the members regarding these curriculum issues.

OPI Indian Education staff is available to answer your questions and concerns regarding Indian Education issues. Please feel free to contact us at 444-3694.

Special Education Division

Special Education Child Count

Child count is the collection of data on students with disabilities who have a valid individualized education plan (IEP) and are receiving special education and related services on the count date of December 1, 2005. An informational memo explaining the process this year was e-mailed to IDEA Part B Authorized Representatives and Project Directors on November 17, 2005. The electronic application used for reporting is open for school districts and cooperatives to print out a prefilled list of students for each school in the district that is composed of the prior year's child count, minus students reported as exiting in the spring. The data entry part of the application will not be available until December 1, 2005. The due date is December 31, 2005.

There must be a completed report submitted for every public school in every school district in the state. If a school has no students to report, there is a "no students" box that must be checked and the report submitted. Resources available (including an instruction manual) may be found on the OPI Web site (<http://www.opi.mt.gov/>) - click the IRIS tab at the top of the screen, click on the INSTRUCTIONS button (lower right corner) on the next screen, and on the Application Instructions screen, scroll down to Special Education Data Collection. If your school district has not been informed of this data collection, or if you have questions concerning the process, please call Pat Reichert at 406-444-4430 or e-mail at preichert@mt.gov.

State Performance Plan for Improved Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

In accord with requirements under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA), the Office of Public Instruction submitted its State Performance Plan (SPP) to the U.S. Department of Education on December 1, 2005. The SPP is a six-year plan which includes 20 performance indicators established by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Performance targets have been set for each of these indicators by the OPI with input and support of the State Special Education Advisory Panel. The SPP serves as our system for accountability for improved outcomes for students with disabilities. A copy of the plan is available on the OPI Web site at www.opi.mt.gov/speced.

Health Enhancement and Safety Division

Coordinated School Health

Disposal of Mercury-Containing Products

As part of Montana's America Recycles Day activities, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality is collecting (at no charge) elemental mercury-containing products from schools – this includes mercury- containing thermometers, barometers, etc. Additionally, DEQ will take containers of elemental mercury. Any school that is interested can contact Bonnie Rouse via phone (406) 841-5251 or e-mail (brouse@mt.gov) by December 9. This is a fantastic opportunity for schools to unload a product that should no longer be used in the classroom – and we may not have the funding to conduct another collection next year. For more information, contact [Cathy Kendall](#), 406-444-0829.

Fitness Testing Recommendation – Fitnessgram

At their October conference, the Montana Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (MAHPERD) recommended that Fitnessgram be the preferred test for fitness testing in Montana school health enhancement programs. This is in alignment with the national AAHPERD recommendation for fitness testing

FITNESSGRAM / ACTIVITYGRAM 8.0 is a computerized tool that enables schools to perform quality fitness assessments, physical activity assessments, and much more. The package includes software, a test manual, and related ancillaries, including The Cooper Institute's *FITNESSGRAM / ACTIVITYGRAM Reference Guide*. For more information call 1-800-747-4457, Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc. For more information, contact [Susan Court](#), 406-444-3178.

Taming the Bully Monster

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) is sponsoring a free webinar on bullying prevention, including two presentations: "ThinkB4UClick... When Kids Hurt Kids Online" (cyberbullying) and "How Bystanders Can Help Change the Bullying Dynamic." Webinar participants follow the workshop on their computers and interact through the telephone. Both presentations include PowerPoints and other materials. The webinar will be held December 19, 2005, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET. The webinar is free, but you must register. To register, contact Belen Pereira at bpereira@ncpc.org, and include your organization, email, and phone number. For more information, contact [Cathy Kendall](#), 406-444-0829.

i-SAFE America Program

The United States Congress selected i-SAFE America Inc., (www.isafe.org) a non-profit Internet safety education foundation, to bring Internet safety education and awareness to our nation's youth. Through our grant, all professional development training, curriculum and associated materials are provided cost-free to schools and law enforcement agencies who partner with us.

i-SAFE America has two major divisions - Education and Outreach. The Education division brings our hallmark K-12 Internet safety curriculum into the classroom, where students learn to act safely and responsibly online. The Outreach division facilitates the extension of students' newly acquired Internet safety knowledge beyond the classrooms and schools and introduces the entire community to the need for Internet safety. To view the i-SAFE Parent Brochure, go to http://www.isafe.org/pdf/Parent_Broch.pdf (72k)

To begin the process of bringing the i-SAFE program to your school district, please contact Linda Patterson directly at lpatterson@isafe.org. For more information, contact [Cathy Kendall](#), 406-444-0829.

Methamphetamine Workshops

The Office of Public Instruction is sponsoring one-day Meth Prevention Workshops at Carroll College in Helena on December 7th (9 am to 3 pm) and in Billings at the MSU-Billings Downtown Conference Center (9 am to 3 pm) on December 9th. Additional workshops are being scheduled across the state and information will be released as arrangements are finalized. The Tools for Schools meth prevention kits, a disk for schools produced in partnership with the Attorney General's Office, will be demonstrated by Kirk Astroth of the Center for Youth Development, Montana State University-Bozeman. Kathryn Woodward, Special Populations Manager for the Yellowstone City-County Health Department will present "Meth in Montana: The Epidemic and Its Impact", including background information on the effects of meth on our kids and their families. For more information, contact Marion Erp, 444-1951 merp@mt.gov or Gary Pfister, 444-3000 gpfister@mt.gov

School Nutrition Program

School Wellness Policy: What Does It Mean for Montana Schools?

In cooperation with the Montana Action for Healthy Kids Team and the Montana School Boards Association, the Team Nutrition Program will be conducting a statewide interactive videoconference, "*School Wellness Policy: What Does It Mean for Montana Schools?*" The conference will be held in late January 2006 at 10 sites around Montana. Look for more information soon. The purpose of the workshop will be to provide information on the new federal regulation, provide model school policies, and to give guidance on implementation and assessment strategies. For more information, visit the School Wellness Policy web page at:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/wellness.html> or call: Team Nutrition Program, (406)-994-5641

Model Beverage Policy

The Montana Beverage Association (MBA) has developed a model beverage policy for schools. It has four main components: only bottled water and 100 percent juice for elementary students; only nutritious and/or lower-calorie beverages for middle school students during school hours; a variety of beverage choices for high school students and at least 50 percent of the slots in high school vending machines will be a mix of nutritious and lower-calorie beverages; and where there is an overlap of grades in one building bottlers will work with the school administrators, boards and parents to accommodate the situation. For more information or a copy of the complete policy, please contact: Montana Beverage Association, Elaine Taylor, Fax: (406) 495-0999 or etaylor@montana.com

Summary of Verification DUE December 15

The verification process was required to be completed by November 15, 2005. The new Summary of Verification form has been distributed to schools, and will be due to the School Nutrition Programs office by December 15, 2005; however, schools are strongly encouraged to submit the Summary of Verification form as soon as possible after the verification process is complete. For more information: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

STEPS SCHOOL DISTRICTS CAN TAKE NOW TO REDUCE THE BURDEN OF SCHOOL MEALS VERIFICATION IN THE FUTURE

1. Qualify for reduced verification requirements. If you do not get a 100% response rate this year, your verification burden for next year will be higher. *The results of the verification process this school year will determine which school districts qualify for administrative relief next school year.* Taking the extra steps needed to get a 100% response is vital to decreasing verification requirements for next year.
2. Reduce the size of the application pool. Use direct certifications and the food stamp recipient list from the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) and be aware of students that are categorically eligible for free meals (runaway, migrant, homeless).
3. File applications in one location. School districts are now required to use a central filing system (since households are only required to complete one application). Filing the applications centrally decreases the total number of applications in the verification pool (one application per household instead of one per student).

For more information, schools are encouraged to access the most current verification memos on the School Nutrition Programs web site: www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/index.html (click on the "Lunch, Breakfast, Snacks and Milk" page, look under the "Verification" pull-down menu), or contact: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

New Dietary Guidelines Encourage Consumption of Whole Grains

The current Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends daily consumption of foods with whole grains as a primary ingredient to protect against many chronic diseases. Increasing the consumption of fiber rich carbohydrates over those found in highly processed products may also be an important step in fighting our national obesity epidemic. School Nutrition Programs encourages schools to inquire about the availability of whole grain products when developing product specification and making procurement plans. We would also like schools to offer whole grains whenever possible as part of their efforts to promote healthy eating and improve the nutritional well-being of their students. Contact: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

All it Takes is Nutrition \$ENSE Guidebook

This toolkit provides information to help schools succeed at selling healthful foods and beverages in student-run stores. It contains lists of popular healthy items, standards for evaluating the nutritional value of an item, food safety information, marketing tips and advice from Montana student store advisors. It is available to download at: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/nutritionsense.htm>. For more information or a free copy of this resource: Team Nutrition Program, (406) 994-5641

“Eat to Be Fit” – Nutrition Education Resource

These twelve informational handouts are designed to provide teens with nutrition information. The topics were chosen by Montana teens to be of most interest and importance to them. This resource is designed to serve as a basis for a variety of teaching methods: as an in-class nutrition lesson, the basis for a newsletter or newspaper article, or a bulletin board display. These handouts will be available to download on the Office of Public Instruction Health Enhancement web page: www.opi.mt.gov/health/Index.html. For more information, or to receive a free hard copy of this resource: Team Nutrition Program, (406) 994-5641

HIV/AIDS/STD Program

World AIDS Day Award

The OPI HIV/AIDS Program will honor two Laurel teachers with the 2005 World AIDS Day award on December 1. Barbara Belinak teaches at the middle school level and Mike Ludwig teaches at the high school level. Each teacher will be presented a plaque, letter of recognition, and a \$300 scholarship to use for HIV/AIDS/STD educational materials. The OPI's World AIDS Day award is an annual event to recognize those teachers or students who provide extraordinary HIV/AIDS prevention education to their school communities. World AIDS Day is recognized worldwide on December 1 to remember those affected by or infected with HIV. To nominate a teacher or student for the 2006 World AIDS Day award contact Susan Court, at 406-444-3178 or scourt@mt.gov.

Driver Education/Advanced Driver Education

Having Trouble Recruiting Traffic Ed Teachers?

Seeking teachers in your own district to obtain the required coursework to teach Traffic Education is an effective way to obtain and retain traffic education teachers. To assist you, OPI has prepared a poster. It can be downloaded from

http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/DriverEd/TeachTrafficED_poster.pdf.

For more information contact David Huff (dhuff@mt.gov) or Fran Penner-Ray (fpennerray@mt.gov).

Crossing Guard Training Is Now Available Online.

Located at www.opi.mt.gov/Streamer/CrossingGuards/Index.html this 20 minute streaming video and accompanying worksheet will provide valuable assistance in the training and deploying of school crossing guards. A link to national recommended policy is also provided.

This resource has been made available through a cooperative endeavor of the Montana Department of Transportation, The Local Technical Assistance Program of Montana State University and the Office of Public Instruction. For more information contact Fran Penner-Ray (fpennerray@mt.gov).

You Wouldn't Think of.....taking an underage teen without a license out on the road in your school vehicle to let him practice drive. Yet that is what you are allowing your teachers to do when your school starts a driver education class without first obtaining OPI program approval. There are about 30 school districts that have not yet applied for and obtained approval to conduct a traffic education program for this school year and summer 2006. Please double check at <http://data.opi.mt.gov/trafficeducation> to ensure your school's driver education program is approved before starting class. Without program approval, it is illegal for those kids to drive, even with an approved teacher. For more information contact Fran Penner-Ray (fpennerray@mt.gov).

Non-Discrimination Policy of the Office of Public Instruction

The Office of Public Instruction is committed to equal employment opportunity and nondiscriminatory access to all our programs and services, and will take necessary and appropriate steps to insure that the workplace and OPI programs and services are free of discrimination and sexual harassment. For information or to file a complaint, contact Kathy Bramer, OPI Title IX/EEO Coordinator at 406-444-3161 or kbramer@mt.gov.